



ADVISORY NOTICE ON AIR POLLUTION BURNING REQUIREMENTS

Every Fall, with cooler and hopefully wet weather, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Summer time burn ban is lifted. With burning comes burn related smoke complaints and the need to provide the public the correct information on how to conduct legal outdoor burns.

Confusion has arisen in the past from out-dated or mistaken information the public may have regarding Air Pollution Control District (APCD) burning and permit requirements. In some instances enforcement action by the APCD has been taken against persons who have violated air pollution regulations as a result of erroneous information that they were given. This advisory outlines basic information regarding APCD burning requirements:

1. Who needs an air pollution burn permit (in addition to a fire agency burn permit)
2. What can legally be burned
3. When can burning take place
4. How burning should occur to prevent a smoke nuisance



1. **WHO NEEDS AN APCD BURN PERMIT:** Generally, residential burning (burning at a single or two family residence) does not require an APCD Burn Permit, but does require a fire agency permit during all or parts of the year depending upon the burn location. Burning at your residence may require an APCD Burn Permit if such burning falls under an APCD regulation where a permit is required (See a. – f. below). Legal burning by the public that is authorized under state law and the APCD regulations, and for which an APCD Burn Permit is required, includes:

- a. Clearing of Land for Development Burning;
- b. Agricultural (Commercial) Burning;
- c. Forestry Activity Burning;
- d. Levee, Ditches, Right of Way and Reservoir Burning;
- e. Fire Hazard Reduction Burning;
- f. Range Improvement Burning, and Wildland Vegetation Management Burning.

If the type of burning activity requires an APCD Burn Permit and burning is conducted without having obtained one, it is illegal and the APCD may take enforcement action to halt the violation. Civil or criminal penalties may be sought.

2. **WHAT CAN BE BURNED:** For all non-residential burning, only dry vegetative material, grown on the property, can be burned. Lawn-clippings cannot be burned under any circumstances. Residents of single- or two-family residence can burn paper and cardboard, originating from the residence, in addition to dry vegetative material, in compliance with APCD and fire agency requirements. The burning of non-vegetative material is to be phased-out by 2004 under recently adopted State regulations. General waste, trash, and construction/demolition materials cannot be burned under any circumstances. These materials can produce poisonous, toxic gases when burned.

3. **WHEN CAN BURNING BE DONE:** Burning is only allowed on “permissive-burn days”, regardless of whether it requires an APCD Burn Permit or not. Those wishing to burn must call **530-889-6868** each day to obtain the “Burn Day and No-Burn Day” information prior to igniting an outdoor fire. The “No-Burn” status is called either as a result of poor air quality conditions or due to hazardous fire conditions. Agricultural burners, such as rice growers or land managers, have special restrictions or allowances set upon when they can burn that are part of the APCD’s Smoke Management Program.
4. **PREVENTING SMOKE NUISANCES:** All outdoor burning must be conducted in such a way as to prevent the smoke from creating a smoke nuisance. Burning wet materials or burning in large quantities produces smoke that lingers and can offend people in addition to significantly affecting air quality. Burning during daylight hours is recommended - thus allowing sunlight to heat the ground surface, evaporate morning dew and allow smoke to lift, mix, and disperse.



POINTS TO REMEMBER: The following are some points where the Air Pollution Control District’s open burning requirements may differ from Fire Agency burning requirements.

- Air Pollution Control Burn Permits are not required for residential “door-yard” burning, while fire agencies require permits for residential burning during the Burn Permit/Fire Season, and in some locations year-round.
- Air Pollution Burn Permits, as noted in item 1 a. – f. “Who Needs an APCD Burn Permit”, are required year round. Some fire agencies require burn permits for the same type of burning only during the Burn Permit/Fire Season.
- Air Pollution requirements restrict burning to dry vegetative materials, excluding lawn-clippings, and for residential burning only – allows the addition of paper and cardboard. Fire agency requirements may or may not restrict the type of material that is burned. In the past, the “safe” burning of illegal material has been allowed by the fire agencies, although this is a violation of air pollution regulations.
- Fire Agency burning requirements have residential pile size restrictions, however, the APCD has no exemptions from the requirement to have an air pollution burn permit based on burn pile size.



ALTERNATIVES TO BURNING: While burning is an option for disposal of vegetation, there are other methods for vegetation disposal. These include composting, shredding of leaves or pine needles, or chipping. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection in conjunction with Placer County Fire offer free residential chipping. To find out more residents can call (530) 889-0111 x 200 or in the Lake Tahoe area (530) 530 546-4347.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please contact the Placer County Air Pollution Control District at (530) 889-7130 if you would like addition information concerning air pollution open burning requirements. It is our belief that having a public that is knowledgeable about both APCD and local fire agencies burning requirements will aid the general welfare of everyone by improving air quality and preventing hazardous burning.